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A New Top Post Filled By Hughes Aircraft

The Hughes Aircraft Company yesterday named Albert D. Wheelon to the newly created position of executive vice president for operations, with responsibility for the aerospace company's six major divisions.

Mr. Wheelon, who is 57, has been president since 1970 of Hughes's space and communications group, the nation's largest producer of military and commercial satellites and supplier of satellites launched by the space shuttles. Hughes, which is based in Los Angeles, was acquired by the General Motors Corporation last June for \$5.1 billion.

A physicist, Mr. Wheelon belongs to the 12-member Presidential commission investigating the Challenger disaster.

In a statement yesterday, Allen E. Puckett, chairman and chief executive of Hughes, said that "Bud Wheelon's appointment will improve the cohesiveness among our highly di-

verse organizations."

In addition to the space and communications sector, Mr. Wheelon will oversee Hughes's electro-optical and data systems, missile systems, radar systems, industrial electronics and ground systems groups. He will report to Donald H. White, Hughes's president and chief operating officer.

Mr. Wheelon, who was traveling yesterday and could not be reached for comment, joined Hughes in 1966 as vice president for engineering. In 1970 he became president of the company's space and communications division, and presided over the department as its ranks grew from 2,000 employees to 10,000.

"During Wheelon's tenure at the space and communications group, Hughes Aircraft has built 60 percent of the communications satellites that are now operating," Mr. White said yesterday.

"As an industrial physicist he's very prominent," said Charles F. Kennel, chairman of the physics department at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Mr. Wheelon was a deputy director of science and technology at the Central Intelligence Agency from 1962 to 1966. For nine years before his C.I.A. job, he worked in the radiophysics laboratory of TRW Systems Inc.

A native of Moline, Ill., Mr. Wheelon earned an engineering degree from Stanford University in 1949 and a doctorate in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1952.

In addition to serving on the Presidential shuttle commission, Mr. Wheelon is a member of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, a Presidential advisory commission.

Kenneth N. Gilpin

Eric Schmidt